

# Canada's Population Problem

*By*

C. W. Peterson

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# I. Canada's Population Problem

**I**N EUROPEAN COUNTRIES libraries have been written around the subject of Economics of Population. Huxley and Spencer held the opinion that it easily transcends all other human problems. In partly developed countries, an intelligent understanding of the vast commercial and social influence of population on national life is obviously a subject of vital interest. It is now conceded by competent authorities that the facts of population growth in European countries and the facts of agricultural economics, point unerringly towards a new era in human history which is bound to have a tremendous effect on Canada's population prospects, and which renders it imperatively necessary that we should forthwith revise all previous ideas and policies in respect to our population problem.

In democratic countries important questions of public policy always have a pronounced political background. Influential occupational groups in Canada are at present in somewhat violent hostility to public expenditure on colonization effort, their judgment, in the absence of intelligent information on the subject, being founded largely on superficial premises. The press of Canada evidently has a patriotic task to perform in bringing the actual facts of the case before their readers and creating a vigorous, crusading public opinion on this issue. Because governments in democracies move only in obedience to the expressed will of the people. The initiative, therefore, must come from the great body of Canadian citizens rather than from their government.

## The Melting Pot in History

As far back as human records are available migration has exercised a paramount influence in shaping world history. The ancient Asiatic and African Empires were founded on conquest and subsequent migration. Thousands of years prior to these civilizations, our Aryan ancestors gradually penetrated into Europe, and in course of time colonized the western parts of that continent, including England. Later comes the Roman invasion of Britain, the western migration of the Huns and the conquest of Rome by the Visigoths, followed shortly after by a Hun invasion of the East, hastening the decline of the great Roman Empire. During the later middle ages the Spanish hordes overran Central and South America, and then came the early colonization of North America by the British and French,

which, after untold hardships and failure after failure, finally reached a permanent basis. Zangwill's "Melting Pot" problem is not a modern one. Human history is based primarily on migration and the assimilation of one nation by the other. Virgin countries must gracefully accept and solve this problem as best they can.

## Colonization of Eastern Canada

Turning to later Canadian migration history, Prof. Ottewell, of the Alberta University, tells us that at the time of the American Revolutionary war, the population of the 13 colonies was approximately 3,000,000, of whom about one-third remained loyal to the British Crown. Many of these people found conditions unacceptable and resolved upon migration. The British Government offered them a choice of transportation back to England or assistance, including free land, if they would settle in Canada. Many of the wealthier class returned to the Mother country, but during the years 1783 to 1786, somewhere between 30,000 and 50,000 migrated to the Maritime Provinces and to what is now the Province of Ontario.

It would, therefore, appear that the United Empire Loyalists founded the two provinces of New Brunswick and Ontario. There was at the time a military British settlement at Halifax, and some small agricultural occupation in Nova Scotia. But the Loyalist influx trebled the population of Nova Scotia almost overnight, and gave a distinctively British turn to Canadian development. Previous to this, Canada's status had been that of a French-speaking colony under British rule, but this Loyalist influx, in numbers to almost equal the French stock, gave an entirely new complexion to Canadian affairs. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Canada's history might easily have been changed, if the proposal of the British government to settle the Loyalists in Australia had been carried out. It failed merely on account of delay in London in settling details of the proposed movement.

## Peaks of Canadian Immigration

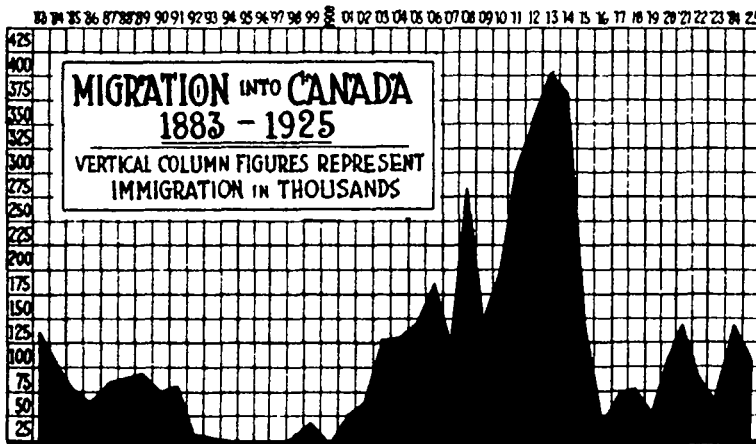
The second important wave of immigration into Canada followed the Napoleonic wars and occurred between the years 1817-1836. At times it reached large dimensions. During four years of this period we are told that 160,000 Britishers settled in Canada, largely in Ontario, and

that in one year as many as 17,000 Irish came. From that time until after Confederation, the disturbed conditions, due to the struggle for responsible government and other difficulties regarding land settlement, considerably retarded immigration, but there was nevertheless a substantial increase of population from this source up to 1871. In that year we find Ontario with a population of 1,620,851, Quebec with 1,191,516, Nova Scotia with 87,820, and New Brunswick with 85,594.

The third great wave of Canadian immigration occurred between 1903 and 1914, reaching its climax in 1913, during which years immigrants came to Canada at a rate of more than 1,000 per day. A very large portion of them settled in the three prairie provinces. Largely as a result of

### A Record of Incapacity

There is no issue before the public of Canada which has been made the target of more fulsome platitudes than that of immigration and colonization. In season and out of season the subject has been worn thread-bare wherever men and women congregate. Aspirants to public office have found it a safe topic for shallow discussion. Our statesmen have filled volumes of Hansard with superficial arguments on the subject. As an abstract theory, almost everyone has apparently been in agreement with the general idea that Canada's future depended upon building up her population and colonizing her vacant lands. But when elections were over and governments settled down to the



this we find that in 1921 Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba had a total population in round figures of about 2,000,000, composed of a great number of diverse nationalities.

During the early part of 1914 this spectacular influx of people ceased abruptly, and during the war years, immigration was reduced to a mere dribble, showing signs of revival in 1920. 1923 was the lowest mark for the past twenty years. 1924 saw a slight improvement, but the volume of new arrivals fell again in 1925. The situation was materially aggravated by the collapse of western land, townsites and oil "booms," which discouraged immigration from Great Britain and the United States. The movement of people into Canada to-day is now down to where it was in the early eighties and there is no indication anywhere of any permanent improvement in this disastrous situation.

prosaic task of administration, the immigration service presented a tempting place for cutting down expenditure to reduce unwieldy budgets, and a "vigorous immigration policy" was too often interpreted to mean an opportunity to create more or less lucrative jobs for broken-down party hacks. It was speciously argued, that almost anyone would fit into that sort of human machine. The people of Canada have, in fact, for years been the complacent victims of unskilled direction of our immigration service.

### The Drift to the United States

Canada is at the moment enjoying reasonable prosperity and there is a body of public opinion willing to leave well enough alone. The continued though partly arrested exodus to the United States is, however, the complete answer to that attitude of mind. National

prosperity is not necessarily reflected in mass prosperity. At any rate, Canadian economic conditions must at least measure up to the high standard set by our neighbour south of the line to enable us to hold our citizens, which is the final test any nation must apply in estimating the material and social welfare of its population.

Many vaguely consider that immigration is coming quite fast enough, and point to highly colored press reports, heralding the occasional arrival of shiploads of people, in justification of that opinion. Statistics, except at census periods, do not, however, show how many of these people now come to Canada with the avowed intention of entering the United States via the back door. That this number is enormous admits of no doubt whatever. Even the number of British new-comers now domiciled in Canada seeking admission to that country in the legal way is great. At the present moment there is a waiting list in the United States consulate for Alberta alone of over 2,200 British-born residents of that province, and in Toronto, 15,000.

This, of course, does not include people of Canadian birth who may enter freely and without formal permission, and the latest Washington figures throw an interesting light on that movement. During the ten months' period, July, 1925, to May, 1926, the total admissions from all countries into the United States under the "Quota Law" was 147,586. The movement from Canada alone was 83,903! During the month of May, Canadian admissions were 8,327, showing no diminution whatever in this outward flow, which is apparently on a basis of 100,000 per annum of native Canadians, aside from British and foreign residents of Canada admitted under the quota law and the large number that enter illegally of whom no record is, of course, available. These figures speak for themselves.

### A Population Analysis

It might be well to endeavour to analyse our population situation and to ascertain what this drift across the line really means in terms of population leakage. We started our national career in 1870 with a population of 3,372,000 according to

our first census. The rate of net natural increase in Canada is figured by statisticians at approximately  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. per annum. Between 1881 and 1920 we had received through immigration an addition to our population of 4,640,000 people. There is no record available of those that entered Canada prior to 1881, but the number must have been considerable. Taking the immigration and net natural increase by ten year periods, we arrive at a figure of roundly 16 millions, which should have been the population of Canada in 1921, providing we had retained the people that came to our shores plus a normal natural increase. But the census of that year showed a population of only 8,800,000 leaving an apparent deficit of 7,000,000 people on our national ledger!

### Our Dual Problem

This is a most disturbing revelation and calculated to make intelligent people pause and consider. Incidentally, we find that instead of being confronted with one difficult problem, we have, as a matter of fact, two: (1) to get the people and (2) to hold the people we get. We may presumably concede that in order to reach a certain accretion of population within any given period, we must perforce pump in sufficient additional population to overcome the double handicaps of a falling birth rate and this very considerable leak. Or, we may possibly conclude that the population we have brought to Canada in past years has contained too great a percentage of people who scorned the labourious task of developing our agricultural lands and preferred the easier life of the towns with the ready opportunity of drifting south when the fancy struck them. That we have not, as a matter of fact, made any considerable progress towards interesting a class of settlers which would root solidly in Canada's fertile soil. Paradoxical as it may appear, one has little difficulty in concluding that the present exodus from Canada is due to rural under-population rather than to general over-population. All of which makes it the more essential that we should now begin to focus thought and energy upon this very perplexing dual problem.



## II. The Effective Minimum Man-power

Before considering any large scale national development project, the intelligent people of Canada will desire to take stock of the country's possibilities and resources and past accomplishments. Those we invite to come to our shores will also want to assure themselves that opportunities exist for bettering their condition. As we are primarily concerned with increased agricultural settlement as a sound foundation for greater national development, it is of interest to learn that this Dominion contains an estimated arable area of 358 million acres. In 1870, 36 million acres of this was occupied; in 1901, the occupied area had grown to 63 million acres and by 1925 to approximately 145 million acres. Of this occupied area 10 million acres were in field crops in 1871, 20 million acres in 1901, and 58 million acres in 1925. So there is to-day only a little over one-sixth of the total arable area of Canada in crop. On this foundation, Canada shows, within the period mentioned, the following remarkable record of national performance, compiled from the latest figures available.

It will be noticed that the figures below show an increase in development quite out of proportion to the small increase in population. There are several explanations of this phenomenon. Increased mechanization, resulting in greater per capita output in industry and agriculture, is perhaps chiefly responsible for this favourable showing, but due credit must also be given to the ingenuity and enterprise of our population, factors of great importance in the development of new countries.

In estimated national wealth in millions of dollars, Canada stands seventh on the list, higher than Australia, Brazil, Argentina and in fact higher than any of the newer countries into which surplus population can freely flow. In wealth per capita, Canada is only surpassed by the United States and Great Britain. Canada is among the only five nations showing a surplus on current account, and is also among those countries having a food surplus. She ranks fifth among the nations

### CANADA'S PROGRESS SINCE CONFEDERATION

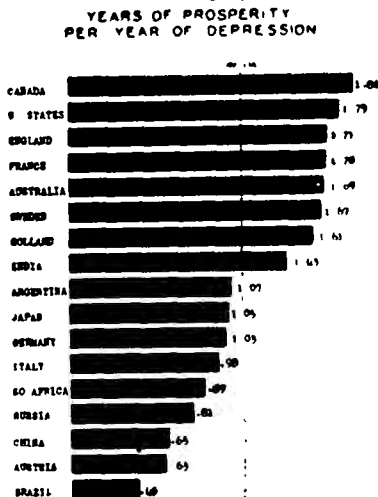
	1870	1901	1925
Population of Canada . . . . .	3,371,598	5,371,315	9,364,200
Per Cent. Rural Population . . . . .	69%	63%	50½%
Capital in Agriculture . . . . .	\$968,000,000	\$1,787,103,000	\$7,508,645,000
Agricultural Production Value . . . . .	\$242,000,000	\$363,126,384	\$1,453,368,000
Area of All Crops—Acres . . . . .	10,000,000	19,763,746	57,852,550
Wheat—Bushels . . . . .	16,700,000	55,572,368	422,327,000
Dairy Production—Value . . . . .	\$1,601,738	\$66,470,953	\$122,027,186
Capital in Manufacturing . . . . .	\$77,964,020	\$446,916,000	\$3,380,322,950
Mfg. Prod. less Cost Raw Mat . . . . .	\$96,709,927	\$214,525,517	\$1,311,025,385
Fisheries—Value . . . . .	\$3,357,510	\$25,737,153	\$44,534,235
Forest Production—Value . . . . .		\$102,165,378	\$197,487,331
Mineral Production—Value . . . . .		\$66,339,158	\$228,440,000
Coal Output—Tons . . . . .	671,008	4,912,664	13,022,000
Developed Waterpower—H.P. . . . .		125,000	4,230,000
Miles of Railway . . . . .	2,270	18,140	52,692
Foreign Trade—Value . . . . .	\$131,028,000	\$196,488,000	\$1,878,294,180
Per Capita Exports . . . . .	\$17.00	\$36.58	\$115.00
Per Capita Imports . . . . .	\$22.00	\$35.45	\$86.00
Exports Agricultural Products . . . . .	\$12,871,055	\$80,276,000	\$616,042,000
Exports Manufactured Articles . . . . .	\$1,572,546	\$16,012,208	\$453,025,000
Per Capita Net Debt . . . . .	\$22.47	\$49.98	\$252.00



as an exporter and seventh as an importer. We cannot, however, afford to rest our case on the material progress we have made. In terms of per capita performance it has been equally as great south of the line and the supposition is that a larger population would have caused almost proportionately greater advance in national development.

#### A Flattering Comparison

The figures contained in the above schedule bear witness to an amazing progress and serve to explain the paramount position Canada evidently occupies amongst nations in respect to her average number of years of business prosperity compared with years of depression, which has recently been computed by the "National Bureau of Economic Research" in the United States, the final result of which is shown in the graph below:



#### The Past and the Future

All of this is very satisfactory, but we must not overlook the fact that this proud record rests on past performance, rendered possible by the easy exploitation of our most available natural resources, at a time when new population was coming our way, with but slight exertion on our part, and when the burden of taxation rested lightly on all classes. We face an entirely different situation to-day. Agricultural development, in terms of steadily increasing production, was the foundation of our success in the past and must be the barometer of our future success or failure. The free homestead and high quality land in close proximity to transportation at from \$3 to \$5 an acre are both things of the past.

With increased land, machinery, commodity and transportation costs and curtailed credit, agricultural settlement has

ceased to be a matter of mere "willing hands and stout heart" and has graduated into the class of capitalistic enterprise. And to add to our difficulties, latter-day immigrants possess less capital than they did in former years. The United States is about the only country from which farmers with even modest capital can be drawn. And they are not coming our way in large numbers at present.

Furthermore, we are not entirely free agents in deciding our future. By virtue of geographical location, the United States sets the pace for Canada. If we wish to retain our present position, we are bound to enter into the race with that nation. If we fall by the wayside, we lose our population. I am not going to argue that this circumstance is the infliction of an unkind fate and an unmitigated evil. Canada still holds the trump cards in the game in her latent natural resources and the inevitable competition with our great neighbour will only serve to spur us on to even greater accomplishments in the future. Such is the spirit of Canada.

#### The Lesson of History

History's unmistakable lesson should not, however, be disregarded by Canada. Years ago Cournot, the French publicist, propounded his riddle of population. He was undecided whether France, as a safety measure, should augment her population at the cost of the inevitable increased economic pressure, which would naturally result in so highly developed a country. He characterised the answer as "God's Secret." Obviously, each country must consider the population question on its economic merits and solely with reference to her own particular situation.

Profitable markets and available, undeveloped natural resources must, within degrees, ever be appraised as a nation's most precious possessions, which should not be bartered away for a mere spectacular census result. They should, on the contrary, be jealously safeguarded against exploitation and regarded as a trust which coming generations have a substantial equity in. Nothing could, for instance, be more foolish than for Canada to set as a definite goal the earliest possible development of her last acre of virgin land, and thus deliberately create the same population pressure which is now driving most of the countries of Europe to the point of desperation and into the arms of communism.

#### The Balanced Population

Stating the case baldly, the persistent drift from Canada to the United States is evidently the product of an unduly accelerated urbanization or industrialization, which, lacking the support of an

adequate and permanent, agricultural, consuming population, has temporarily thrown Canada out of economic equilibrium, inevitably leading to unemployment and subsequent emigration. The real problem that confronts this country and which calls loudly for solution, is an increase in population up to the point where Canada will present a fairly harmonious, economic unit. Where the burden of taxation may be so distributed over more shoulders that it bears lightly on all, where our vast, over-expanded transportation machine may be operated efficiently and economically and where local consumption of industrial products may be large enough to give industry and consumer the benefit of savings incidental to quantity production. We cannot safely overlook the fact that the first duty of a young nation is to make itself economically secure.

As world history has been moulded through the ebb and flow of population, we cannot escape the universal experience and hope to carry on without serious reflection upon this vital factor in our national life. It is high time Canada took stock of herself, her resources and her institutions and commenced to formulate national policies in keeping with her peculiar conditions and limitations. Have we, for instance, any rational ideas in respect to our population requirements? Should we aim at the status of Russia with 15 per cent. urban and 85 per cent. rural population, or should we strive to reach the standard of the United States with 72 per cent. urban and 28 per cent. rural population? At what point lies the approximate normal equilibrium for Canada?

Obviously, such questions as these must be answered before we can attempt to construct rational development aims. There is somewhere a point in population where Canada, as a business and productive unit, would function under reasonably normal overhead cost, which point can be approximately ascertained. The goal should be to maintain by a vigorous immigration policy and, when the time comes, by a "closed door" policy, a fairly balanced population in terms of occupation

and to sustain the proper equilibrium by wise legislation and executive direction as far as such may legitimately and effectively be done. This, of course, is an ideal situation which nations can only approximately approach.

#### Our Effective Minimum

The whole of the United States has an arable area of 345 million acres. The three western provinces alone contain an arable area of 175 million acres, 37 million of which only are now under cultivation. We evidently have room, without crowding, for a population of, at least, 50 million people in Canada. But our present objective should not be to fill up the country to its ultimate capacity or anywhere near it. We should, on the other hand, merely strive to reach our effective, minimum population. Where is that point? We have a mile of railway for every 178 inhabitants. The United States has one for every 400. This would indicate railway efficiency when we reach a population approximately twice as great as we now have. Our present higher and decidedly top-heavy educational plant could readily accommodate the legitimate requirements of such a population without any considerable increased cost. Our elaborate and absurdly expensive Federal, Provincial and Municipal machines could be—and should be—made to serve such a population.

As a rough and ready guess, and without the concentrated, scientific research the importance of this problem merits, it may perhaps be estimated that Canada must approximately double her population to function efficiently and economically. An intelligent comprehension of this many sided question and the formulation of adequate policies to assist in its solution would appear to be the supreme task that now confronts Canadian statesmen and economic experts. Until the people of Canada arrive at a complete realization of that fact and force the issue into the commanding position it demands, our political leaders will assuredly continue to pursue the present apathetic, and short-sighted, attitude towards the colonization question.

# A QUARTER CENTURY OF PROGRESS

## EASTERN CANADA

	ONTARIO			QUEBEC			NEW BRUNSWICK		PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND NOVA SCOTIA	
	1901	1925	1901	1925	1901	1925	1901	1925	1901	1925
Total Investment in Agriculture . . . . .	\$932,488,067	\$1,915,438,939	\$436,076,916	\$1,245,305,866	\$51,338,311	\$141,599,527	\$103,190,600	\$215,192,465		
Acres in All Crops . . . . .	9,212,478	10,364,317	4,704,396	6,828,700	1,405,615	909,945	1,177,883	1,215,222		
Total Value Agricultural Production . . . . .	\$196,952,362	\$477,159,000	\$44,851,108	\$282,739,000	\$12,873,480	\$50,646,000	\$24,461,972	\$62,989,000		
Wheat—Bushels . . . . .	28,418,907	24,345,000	1,968,203	1,210,000	381,699	230,000	987,155	852,600		
Dairy Products—Value . . . . .	\$34,776,330	\$149,733,073	\$20,207,826	\$33,763,114	\$2,260,537	\$7,615,000	\$3,997,611	\$15,527,917		
Manufactures, Less Raw Material—Value . . . . .	\$105,633,486	\$671,939,695	\$73,760,142	\$414,388,925	\$8,972,470	\$20,932,755	\$8,919,221	\$33,577,635		
Mineral Production—Value . . . . .	\$11,258,099	\$87,722,491	\$3,292,383	\$23,173,643	\$580,495	\$1,901,505	\$9,298,479	\$17,667,237		
Population . . . . .	2,182,947	2,933,662	1,648,898	2,673,993	331,120	387,876	562,833	612,452		
Miles of Railway . . . . .	7,339	10,956	3,387	4,919	1,499	1,947	1,470	1,703		
No. of Horses . . . . .	721,138	644,138	320,673	345,079	61,789	50,782	96,239	86,104		
No. of Cattle . . . . .	2,487,806	2,911,328	1,365,869	1,941,558	227,196	216,488	428,953	406,166		
No. of Sheep . . . . .	1,046,456	868,526	654,503	843,579	182,524	151,349	410,790	360,718		
No. of Swine . . . . .	1,562,696	1,678,595	404,163	784,143	51,763	60,376	93,412	96,784		

# WESTERN CANADA

	MANITOBA		SASKATCHEWAN		ALBERTA		BRITISH COLUMBIA	
	1901	1925	1901	1925	1901	1925	1901	1925
Total Investment in Agriculture .....	\$151,355,081	\$748,233,751	\$49,850,000	\$1,897,579,575	\$29,310,000	\$1,113,702,570	\$33,491,978	\$231,592,651
Acres in All Crops.....	2,756,106	6,939,516	818,000	21,288,360	115,000	11,000,000	171,504	586,902
Total Value Agricultural Production	\$24,450,710	\$142,046,000	\$10,039,000	\$285,210,393	\$3,350,000	\$254,000,000	\$6,664,369	\$65,153,513
Wheat—Bushels	18,353,013	39,453,000	4,500,000	240,551,000	600,000	103,000,000	359,419	1,178,700
Dairy Products—Value	\$2,792,606	\$18,146,073	\$729,574	\$19,357,329	\$546,476	\$23,000,000	\$1,159,993	\$10,629,350
Manufactures—Less Raw Material—Value	\$5,927,437	\$41,361,438	\$485,994	\$15,004,191	\$978,893	\$22,725,424	\$8,447,778	\$82,095,312
Mineral Production—Value....	None	\$2,178,241	\$51,600	\$1,086,829	\$758,515	\$25,005,718	\$14,461,527	\$61,492,242
Population ...	255,211	610,118	91,279	828,600	73,022	588,454	178,657	560,000
Miles of Railway	2,780	4,540	1,551	7,031	1,000	4,784	1,576	5,144
No. of Horses	163,867	359,839	83,801	1,169,952	92,661	849,939	37,325	48,208
No. of Cattle	349,886	720,745	268,779	1,499,411	322,960	1,520,731	125,002	287,828
No. of Sheep	29,464	101,997	66,048	131,359	87,104	236,804	33,350	61,224
No. of Swine	126,459	298,507	27,847	610,973	46,069	854,902	41,419	41,868

### III. The Vital Asset in National Development

If we capitalize that portion of the national income which is ascribable to human effort it is found to be from six to eight times all property values. Even the staggering amount of life insurance in force is only a fraction of this capitalized value. We may, therefore, readily conclude that Canada's "vital" asset is easily her greatest. A study of the economic value to Canada of a new settler is illuminating. Incidentally it is shown that over 163 million dollars have been brought to this country in cash and effects by immigrants. This new wealth has played its important part in the development of the country. Prof. Irving Fisher calculates that the capitalized productive value of the average individual to the state is \$3,000. The new-born child has a money value of \$95, the value increasing to \$4,000 by twenty years of age, and dropping to \$2,900 at fifty, according to accepted calculations.

The recent European war and its aftermath brought home to the world a multitude of strange economic facts, many of them old as the hills, but up to that time wholly unrecognized. One of the outstanding lessons taught mankind was that there is absolutely no limit to the amount of work to be done in this world, or to the amount of business to be developed. The truth is that over-production is theoretically inconceivable. The purchasing ability of every country lies primarily in its own power of production, and the more each country produces, the greater may be its trade with other countries. The more they all produce together, the greater the variety of comforts and necessities available for the world's population. Even in the most prosperous countries multitudes are living in a perpetual state of bare subsistence. We have not even approached within measurable distance of satisfying reasonable human wants leave alone over supplying them.

#### Unbalanced Production

What Canada, and many other countries, has suffered from during recent years and what has given rise to general unemployment, is not necessarily over-population, but unbalanced production. While Canada's urban and rural populations have been unequally distributed, our aggregate working force has been, and still is, vastly below our minimum, urgent,

national requirements. With untold mineral and forest wealth and millions of acres of the world's richest, agricultural lands lying idle and undeveloped, and the world clamouring for food, it is paradoxical to harbour an unemployment problem. Widespread unemployment under such conditions is *prima facie* evidence of arrested development and this must largely be due to bankrupt state-manship in so far as sufficient intelligence and energy has not been focussed on the solution of problems which obviously lend themselves to correction by well-known and proven methods.

That over-population inevitably leads to unemployment and increased economic pressure can hardly be doubted. The difficulty, however, lies in discriminating between over-production and under-development. Granting, for instance, that British industry and agriculture do not lend themselves to any early further development, in view of the number of people who are at this time in a state of continuous unemployment and deriving their maintenance from public doles, there can be no difficulty in concluding that that country is, at least temporarily, over-populated. But the occasional acute, seasonal unemployment in the Overseas Dominions cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be ascribed to over-population. It is essentially the product of under-development of their latent agricultural and other resources. The present over-population menace of Great Britain and most European countries and the under-population problem of the Overseas Dominions are equally acute. In view of the mushroom growth of the urban world, aided and abetted by public policy, the rational distribution of the domiciled white population is rapidly becoming the central problem of modern statesmanship.

#### The Citizen Consumer

In considering the social value of the citizen we cannot overlook his performance as a consumer of the commodities produced within the state. This has an important bearing on employment and general prosperity. The greater beneficiary in this respect is urban labour and industry. According to the latest annual figures Canadian industry produced goods of a gross value of 2,781 million dollars. Of this she exported goods amounting

to 453 million dollars. The balance divided by population, leaves an annual, per capita consumption of manufactured articles of \$243.30. For every dollars worth of export, over five dollars worth of such production was consumed at home. This clearly demonstrates the enormous value of the home market to Canadian labour and industry and, incidentally, the vast significance to be attached to a policy having for its object the augmentation, within reasonable limits, of Canada's consuming population. Every man, woman and child added to our population is a potential customer to the extent of \$243.30 of manufactured goods. Every family placed on the land will sustain from one to two families in town. Urban labour and industry have everything to gain from an intelligent colonization and agricultural development policy.

### **Quantity Production**

But that is not the only, or indeed the main consideration. Mass production is the essential element in successful, modern industry. It is the goal towards which Canadian policy, under both political parties, has been consistently directed ever since confederation. Following the war every country under the sun, including even Great Britain with certain limitations, has adopted a protective system with the sole aim of promoting within its boundaries mass production in order to ensure efficient manufacturing. The economic principle of protection is that competition at home will regulate prices and ultimately reduce them to the level of competing countries. But such obviously cannot come to pass until the consuming population at home is sufficiently great to permit of quantity production with all its economies.

Canadian agriculture will clearly suffer by reason of inflated commodity prices, leading to a higher production cost, until our general consuming population reaches a point where our industries can function more effectively and will voluntarily—or, if need be, by compulsion—reduce commodity prices, resulting in a lower cost of farm operation and living all around. Until we can bring about a spectacular increase of population, the present handicap of high commodity and operating costs, cannot be removed. This handicap is the chief grievance of Canadian agriculture, buying, as it does, in a protected market and selling its own produce against the competition of white, yellow and black labour.

### **The Farmer and Colonization**

The Canadian farmer, however, has a more direct and immediate interest in colonization. In fact, lasting agricultural

prosperity is not possible in a new country without the steady, progressive colonization and development of the vacant spaces by permanent settlers. Land values to-day, east and west, are at a very low ebb, and many farmers have thus seen their chief asset shrink to such an extent that substantial equities have in some instances totally disappeared, representing the loss of the fruits of years of hard labour on the part of every member of the family. This condition we may safely regard as one of the chief causes of the present agricultural unrest and exodus.

Land represents his principal borrowing asset. Stable land values lie at the foundation of rural credit in practically all its forms. When land values become demoralized the whole agricultural credit structure is undermined. Credit of all sorts is curtailed and interest rates advance. In fact, it may be laid down as an economic axiom, that a prosperous agriculture and a contented rural population are not within the possibilities with receding and unstable land values. The demoralizing effect upon the farmer of the progressive shrinkage of his chief capital asset is in itself bound to exercise a most unfortunate influence upon his morale.

There is to-day a vast area of vacant lands on the market in the prairie section of Canada and improved farms are offered for sale in other provinces at bargain prices. The demand for such properties slackened perceptibly with the drying up of the stimulating flow of immigration some years ago. The farmer should be keenly interested in recreating a normal market for rural properties. A comparatively limited demand for land would quickly be reflected in strengthened values all around and the moral effect would be electrical.

### **Domestic Consumption**

But aside from all this, there would be an enormous direct advantage to Canadian agriculture in a largely augmented population. The home market now absorbs 837 million dollars' worth of agricultural products as against our export market of 600 millions. The annual per capita consumption of farm products in Canada is thus \$87.50. The Western farmer, producing almost entirely for export, receives little benefit from our present home consumption of farm products, but with our population doubled the domestic market would loom up as a very important factor in his sales. At present he is at the mercy of overseas countries, which are now striving with every nerve, and with more or less success, to promote decreased agricultural imports. At any moment he may be virtually closed out

by tariff walls, as happened to his animal products in the United States market. His wheat will always be wanted, but his other products enter these countries on sufferance only. The development of a home market for animal products is a safety measure he cannot afford to neglect. A bitter lesson has already been administered to him by our neighbours across the line

### The Competition Argument

Our farmers, particularly those of the West, are often apprehensive of the effect of largely augmented agricultural production on market prices. The increasing population of Europe and the development of trade in agricultural products with the teeming millions of oriental countries, coupled with the rising home demands of many of the present exporting countries, will amply counterbalance any enhanced Canadian production of basic foodstuffs. So we need not apparently concern ourselves over much about the question of not finding a ready market for any volume of Canadian staple agricultural products we are apt to raise.

We might also reasonably conclude, that a farmer in Great Britain, Sweden or Roumania is apparently just as much in competition with the Canadian farmer in the export market, whether he produces in his own country, in ours, or in any other. A healthy inflow of new settlers has a decidedly beneficial effect on the prices of work horses and domestic breeding stock of all classes. The absence of such an outlet for a class of stock not always in demand at the public markets, owing to age and condition, has seriously depressed all live-stock values during the past years of colonization stagnation. There would also be obvious social and educational advantages to the domiciled farmer in denser rural settlement. The Canadian farmer should welcome settlers with open arms for these reasons only.

### A Settler's Traffic Value

Canadian railways are vitally interested in ascertaining the traffic value of the settler. Some years ago able statisticians obtained, as a basis, the percentage of their whole prairie freight traffic derived from grain, livestock, coal and in and outgoing passenger revenue, and divided the number of settlers into the figures given. The exact percentages of each of the railways were worked out, based on the total grain tonnage for the year between the first of September, 1915, and the 31st August, 1916. The total for the prairie provinces for the classes of revenue referred to was \$163,516,318. In 1916 there were 219,105 farmers in these provinces and the division of one total

by the other places the settler's traffic value at \$746.33. This amount, capitalized at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., gives a return of \$13,569.63, which would appear to be the capital value of each farmer to our railways.

### The Social Investment

Accepting Prof. Irving Fisher's estimate of average value to the state at \$3,000 for each productive citizen, we may logically conclude that it would apparently be sound business to expend up to this amount upon the maintenance, education and training of the native-born child until it reaches the productive age, or, in order to compensate for a falling birth rate or to speed up settlement, upon propaganda and other effort to transplant in Canada an acceptable person of productive age from another country. Records show that since 1870 we have brought somewhat over  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million people to Canada at a direct cost to the government of 37 million dollars. Estimating the expenditure of the railways, provinces and other active agencies at an additional 45 million dollars, the aggregate cost would be 82 million dollars, or an average cost per head of less than \$20, and from this we should properly deduct 13 million dollars which has been collected under the Chinese head tax provision, the cost of administration of which is included in the government expenditure. This would bring the direct public contribution down to less than six dollars per immigrant!

Has Canada ever spent money more advantageously? Is it conceivable that any national investment could possibly yield greater returns? It is safe to predict that the people of Canada, with all the facts before them, would insist upon the annual, Federal expenditure for immigration purposes being largely increased and brought more nearly in line with the urgent necessities of the case.

### The Sense of Human Values

It is instructive to contemplate the unfriendly attitude of European nations towards the emigration of their citizens, except to their own overseas possessions. No matter how fierce the economic pressure, how widespread unemployment and distress, no progressive nation deliberately promotes emigration to evacuate obvious surplus population. There is, on the contrary, a keen appreciation of the potential value to the state of the vital asset, and nations will go to almost any lengths and incur the most fantastic expenditure on relief, to preserve this precious asset intact during periods of economic stress, in the hope of the unemployed population being ultimately absorbed in gainful production. We, in Canada, lack almost completely this sense



of human values. We sit idly by while three hundred million dollars worth of our productive citizens, the flower of the nation, move across the boundary each year. Even the problem of their replacement gives comparatively small concern. For a country with our fabulous, undeveloped resources, it seems an amazingly unintelligent attitude of mind.

The colonization problem in Canada is not in any sense a class problem. Every citizen, irrespective of occupation, has a direct financial interest in its effective solution. If every class of the community would intelligently study the effect of an increased producing population upon its own fortunes, we would speedily create a favorable mass opinion on this subject.



## IV. Rural Colonization and Urban Prosperity

It is useful to arrive at a clear appreciation of the general economic effect of an enlarged agriculture. The average person readily gives intellectual assent to the time-worn phrase that agriculture is the "backbone of the nation," but usually without positive conviction or any adequate conception of the fundamental facts of the case. It is generally a mere figure of speech. It is, therefore, well to consider briefly to what extent agriculture has been responsible for Canada's material progress. Forty-one per cent. of our net production in the last census year was agricultural; thirty-three per cent. manufacturing. Our forests, mines, fisheries, construction, etc., account for the remaining twenty-six per cent. Our 8 billions of agricultural capital represents 36 per cent. of Canada's total available wealth. Urban real estate accounts for 26 per cent.; our railway plants, 10 per cent.; forests,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; mines,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and manufacturing equipment,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

### **Economic Importance of the Farm**

It will thus be clear, that Canada's agriculture looms up as the largest, single factor in her economic life, with the farmers as the largest group of domestic consumers, consequently exercising a commanding influence upon the general business conditions of the country. One-third of all revenue freight carried by our railways originated on the farm and another third was doubtless represented in carrying commodities of all kinds back to the farm, and the transportation to and from agricultural raw material. The Canadian farm not alone feeds the nation, but exports on such a scale that credits are available to balance our international obligations and create a favourable trade balance.

Besides the millions of farm workers directly engaged in producing, there are other millions earning their living by performing work connected with supplying the implements, tools, shoes, clothing, etc., for the farmer, with the manufacture of raw material originating on the farm and the distribution and transportation of such commodities. Who is bold enough to attempt correctly to estimate the economic importance of agriculture in a country like Canada? It is perhaps well within the mark to assert that at least 80 per cent. of Canada's total population, in every walk of life, depends absolutely on the farm, directly or indirectly.

These are imposing figures and should lead thinking men to speculate on the possible performance of Canadian agriculture in terms of national development, were we in the happy position where more than a mere fringe of our agricultural area was on a producing basis. If, for instance, we were producing on one-half, or even on one third, of our arable lands instead of only one-sixth, granting a fair occupational balance, our present economic problems would vanish over night. The time is ripe for bringing such a situation about. We have the undeveloped natural resources the markets are there, we only need the man-power and the capital to complete the circle. And that is purely a matter of intelligent business organization.

### **Agricultural Prosperity**

The time is peculiarly favourable for great, forward looking colonization policies, because agriculture is undoubtedly now in the process of entering an era of greater prosperity. It is estimated that there is a total world area of 13 Bill. acres of arable lands and that it takes the products of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres to sustain each head of population. This would provide the bare necessities of life for 5,200 million people. It is also estimated that with the present rate of increase this number would be reached well within a century, so that babies now born might witness the struggle of mankind for bare existence and even wholesale starvation in years of extended crop failure. Of course, such a calamity will be averted. The present world wide decrease in birth rate is nature's corrective. But that foodstuffs will from now on occupy an increasingly stronger price level cannot for a moment be doubted.

Canada's position as a producer and exporter of the primary necessities of life is becoming increasingly stronger. In the long run we need entertain no fear whatever from the competition of intensive agricultural development policies in the older civilizations. Intensive farming is not the answer to food scarcity. An acre of wheat still produces, at a minimum cost in terms of calories, more human food than the same acre devoted to almost any other crop. History teaches that highly intensive farming is the consequence of pressure of population and increasing land values, necessitating the expenditure of more labour on smaller areas in the production of high-priced crops, yielding more

money value, though, generally, less food value per acre. The extensive agricultural system of our fertile plains region is economically sound as a bell. The day will never come when Europe can function without our staple agricultural exports.

### History and Agricultural Prices

Agriculture the world over has developed through the crude, ruthless directive agency of the law of supply and demand. The farmers have, in obedience to this law, for several decades suffered through demoralized prices due to an over supply of food products. But the reaction is now upon us—the pendulum is swinging the other way, and we have definitely entered an era when food products of all kinds will command a premium in the world's markets. Aside from this, it would be absurd to argue that, in the face of constantly rising commodity prices, which will be maintained through the organization of industrial labour, prices of the basic necessities of life should remain stationary or decrease.

This prediction is not visionary, but has a definite, historical background. Wheat, Canada's great, staple export, is, more or less, the controlling factor in all agricultural prices. The comparatively low wheat prices that have prevailed until the past few years cannot be regarded as in any way normal. The high and low price records per bushel in the Liverpool market and the average for some centuries, were as follows:—

High Records: 1917, \$2.28; 1918, \$2.19; 1920, \$2.43; 1801, \$3.63; 1810, \$3.24; 1812, \$3.85; 1709, \$1.99; 1796, \$2.39; 1799, \$2.10.

Low Records: 1894, 69c; 1895, 70c; 1717, 68c; 1732, 67c; 1654, 60c; 1688, 69c.

The averages for centuries were: 1600-1699, \$1.17; 1700-1799, \$1.20; 1800-1899, \$1.73; 1900-1920, \$1.28.

### The Psychological Moment

Normally the price of wheat should be twice as high to-day as it was some centuries ago in view of the lower general price index of those days. The opening up of vast areas of virgin wheat lands in America demoralized world prices temporarily. This condition is, however, being overtaken at a rapid rate and it is unthinkable that such a situation could ever arise again. Canada now enjoys a virtual monopoly of the sole remaining, undeveloped hard wheat areas. Our wheat should, and presently will, command a considerable premium in the world's market. Quite aside from the economics of the wheat situation, there is nothing in history to warrant the belief that minimum prices will not remain

permanently on the fairly satisfactory basis of the last two years, which will ensure reasonable agricultural prosperity to Canada.

It is clear as daylight that the psychological moment for a country to launch a comprehensive colonization campaign is when her agriculture has definitely entered the upward swing. Western history, and the experience of those who have been in close touch with colonization work there, point unmistakably to the fact that failure on the land is the greatest obstacle to the efforts of the various agencies devoting time and money to furthering overseas emigration. It is also a trite saying, but in strict accordance with the truth, that the successful settler is our most effective colonization agent. Common sense upholds both of these assertions. It naturally follows that Canada can now with confidence enter the field with a vigorous effort to largely augment her producing population and with the added assurance that in no period of her history were the opportunities more favourable for getting the fullest possible value for her expenditure on such an object.

### Holding Our Rural Population

Our colonization problem is, comparatively speaking, elementary. Money and intelligent organization would solve it. The more difficult phase of our dual problem is holding our population. But with greater agricultural prosperity in plain sight, even that which will be largely simplified as time goes on. But that we should, in the meanwhile, do everything in our power to arrest our abnormal population leak can hardly be open to argument. What should we do about it? The answer, if answer there is, would obviously constitute a detailed and complete chart of the economic sea showing the safe harbours, the shoals and the hidden rocks. We must, of course, make the average man in Canada so contented and prosperous that emigration would have no attractions for him, which would naturally be the goal of all rational statesmanship.

Theoretically, our political leaders and our public services should work out these detailed, sailing directions in co-operation. Practically, one can hardly imagine a more hopeless machine for such a purpose. Democratic politics is primarily concerned with party welfare. Its appeal is to the great body—the least intelligent—of voters. It is swayed this way and that way by popular prejudice. Politics is concerned with herd psychology and mass hysteria. Political leaders frequently—perhaps generally—know what should be done in the best

interest of the country, but uninformed, mass opinion dictates policy in the end. As to the public service—our bureaucracy—it has in its multitude of watertight compartments all the detailed data we may need to form intelligent conclusions on economic questions and it contains within its ranks many brilliant and resourceful technical men, but co-operation and team work—the conference spirit—is totally lacking.

### **The Light That Failed**

We did, however, once upon a time, actually make a gesture designed to get below the surface and to attempt to make an intelligent survey of Canada's economic situation from which, presumably, public policies might have been formulated and placed before the country, backed by the very considerable prestige naturally attached to a program worked out by a non-political body of able men, many of them of national reputation, giving their services gratuitously and solely from motives of public spirit. I refer to the late, lamented "Economic Commission," which, after gathering a vast amount of vital information, for some reason that has never been explained to the public, failed to complete its labour and make a report. I am credibly informed that its preliminary findings were "uncomfortable" to the government of the day resulting in even these being sternly suppressed. It is understood that a mass of useful information was gathered by this body and drastic recommendations made on many subjects, amongst others, in respect to immigration administration. These are, presumably still on record in the dusty tomes at Ottawa.

I may, however, be permitted to offer the suggestion that in spite of the fact that public policies in Canada have always, and to a glaring extent, revolved around urban interests, the "high spots" in our economic riddle will not be found in our towns and cities, but in our countryside. All our troubles would admittedly be over if Canada could to-day boast of a reasonably self-contained and prosperous agriculture, producing and consuming on double the present scale. That such a situation could be brought about within a limited term of years admits of no argument whatever. We have the "man-less land," elsewhere they have the "land-less man." The task of bringing them together is merely a question of intelligent business management and agricultural prosperity is in the offing. If the average Canadian could create a state of mind which would conscientiously regard this task as the supreme responsibility of his government, not omitting to articulate his convictions, the thing is done.

### **The Lack of Agricultural Mindedness**

But there is also a social problem, namely, to make country life in Canada much more attractive than it has been in the past. Great progress has been made in that direction during the past decade. The motor car, good roads, the rural telephone and mail delivery, radio—all have made conspicuous contributions. The farmers, through their co-operative institutions and by their own, unaided efforts, have taken mighty strides towards increased, rural prosperity and contentment. The urban people of Canada should, however, assiduously cultivate "agricultural mindedness" and be actively sympathetic towards the efforts of the countryside to live the fuller life. That way only lies the path leading to a permanent agriculture. At present rural life is two generations behind the urban community in living conditions and the spectacular drift to the cities constitutes a demonstration against present inferior conditions of farm life compared with urban existence.

The sarcastic ranting about the "auto-riding" farmer and "back-to-the-buggy" should cease. We should, on the contrary, rejoice over every new farm auto and be thankful for every additional farm home getting away from the agricultural slum status through the adoption of modern sanitation. Unfriendly criticism of this nature has its moral effect upon the countryside and does its part in encouraging the drift from country to town, inevitably followed by seasonal unemployment with its concomitants: a lower wage scale and the further expatriation of our splendid, young manhood, after bearing the not inconsiderable burdens of the unproductive period and the cost of education.

### **Canada's Urbanization**

Aside from this, the present detached, and often impatient, attitude of town towards countryside cannot fail to further intensify the notorious political drift away from rural problems and towards centralization upon the more spectacular, urban issues, incidental to the complex civilization of modern times. In a preponderatingly agricultural country such as ours, this world-wide tendency should be curbed at any cost and a more sympathetic understanding developed, in deed as well as word, between urban and rural interests. Canada has much to learn in that direction.

To those who see in the existing situation a tendency which might some day easily lead to a weakening of the ties that bind Canada to the British Empire, our present economic position is not

entirely reassuring. Because history shows that in the course of time economic considerations will invariably prevail over patriotic sentiment. While we cannot hope to outstrip our powerful neighbor, we can come much nearer creating opportunities for our own people at home than we are doing at present and thus arresting the debilitating leak of our precious, vital asset and stifling the inferiority complex we have unconsciously created in our public mind, which cannot be without its important influence upon the individual decision leading to southbound migration.



## V. An All-Canadian Issue

It was clearly brought out at the last Dominion Boards of Trade Convention at Winnipeg, that Canada's key problem centres around the population question. Whatever difficulties confront us are directly traceable to an inadequate agricultural producing and consuming population compared with our industrial, business and governmental machine. We suffer from a lack of economic balance—the almost universal complaint. In Canada's case, however, we have the power and opportunity to apply corrective measures, which the older nations have not. They find themselves in a cul-de-sac from which they are unable to emerge.

### The Eastern Problem

It has always been a popular superstition in Canada that the immigration question is a purely western one. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The highly developed province of Prince Edward Island is probably not specially interested. The same may also apply to the self-contained Province of Quebec, whose virile, agricultural population is multiplying at a rapid rate, furnishing ample recruits for the development of the vast hinterland and of the very finest pioneer type, used to hard work and following a standard of living in line with the requirements of this arduous task. Ontario faces a particularly difficult and pressing colonization problem in her northern areas, which so far has never been seriously attacked.

At the convention above referred to there was a large delegation from the Maritime Provinces which told in eloquent terms the calamitous story of adversity that has befallen that part of the Dominion since confederation. The drain of population to the United States was referred to. The stagnation of industry, owing to Ontario and Quebec competition, was acknowledged. But there was a deplorable absence of constructive, remedial suggestion. The development of maritime ports and the like would apparently have little or no effect on removing the fundamental causes of distress, nor is it clear how secession, openly suggested by many influential men, could materially alter the present unfortunate predicament.

The real reason for the prostration of the Maritime Provinces lies in a decadent agriculture. The reduction in crop area between 1901 and 1925 of nearly half a million acres tells an eloquent story amply explained by a loss of 50,000 in

rural population. No other part of Canada can produce so shocking a record, and there is not the least necessity for any further explanation of the existing situation. If the Maritime Provinces could have emulated the example of the New England States and staged a great industrial renaissance, all would have been well; but for geographical and economic reasons this measure of relief is denied them. The real and only sound remedy lies in an intelligent colonization and agricultural development policy with a complete recognition of the fact, that these provinces present a special and difficult problem in colonization, which cannot be met by the indiscriminate immigration effort of the past and the present.

### Population and Transportation

No country in the world depends so abjectly and completely upon the highest degree of efficiency in transportation as Canada does. Our great exporting area, contributing the bulk of the railway tonnage, lies far inland and presents practically a one-way haul and thus creates a unique problem. Canada's whole future development in agriculture and industry will be absolutely limited and controlled by the skill and ingenuity of our transportation leaders and the expedition with which we may succeed in augmenting our population, so as to eliminate the terrible handicap we heedlessly created when we embarked on our spectacular railway expansion program some years ago.

Canada has 52,692 miles of railways to serve a pitiful nine million people. In 1900 we had only 17,657 miles of railway. This enormous expansion adventure, was based on the confident expectation that the stream of immigration would continue unabated, or even at a greater rate than prevailed during the earlier years of the present century. In this we have been woefully disappointed. We have to-day more miles of railway than any other country, except the United States, and more miles per thousand inhabitants than any country on earth. This is very impressive; also very expensive. Our transportation plant is apparently about twice as large as it ought to be. But it will be needed one of these days, so we cannot profitably scrap any considerable part of it.

### The Consequences of Rate Control

Canada now enjoys the lowest freight rates in the world's transportation history.

Europeans look upon this creditable achievement with envy and admiration. But our geographical handicaps render such a high standard of efficiency absolutely imperative. The Canadian public is in intimate business partnership with all its railway systems, whether corporately or publicly owned. The impartial hand of rigid public control rests upon them all, equally and effectively. But this safeguard against excessive rates naturally creates certain unavoidable responsibilities. In point of fact, Canada must either provide a sufficient volume of traffic to yield her railways a satisfactory net return on capital invested, or submit to increased rates. That seems to be the inevitable choice and logical consequence of rate control.

So we cannot apparently afford to regard our transportation problem with unconcern. Until such time as increased population more nearly balances our railway facilities, we must pay for the present uneconomic situation either through taxation or through increased carrying charges. Our transportation leaders in their public utterances are unanimous in the conclusion, that, having now almost completely exhausted the possibilities in the way of operating economies, further relief must come through a vigorous and successful national immigration policy.

#### **A Herculean Task**

If, for the time being, we are prepared to accept the crude theory that Canada must somewhere near double her population in order to reach an economic position where her citizens may be usefully employed and derive the greatest possible reward for their labour, we have before us a definite goal towards which to strive. The United States contained Canada's present population in 1820 and reached 17 millions by 1840, largely by natural increase. There is, however, no longer any such tendency to rapid natural increase in Canada to-day or, for that matter, in any other country of advanced civilization. To bring Canada up to the point of an effective population within a reasonably brief period is, evidently a task involving statesmanship of the highest order.

In summing up the problem before us, we find that it has taken us 50 years of natural increase and an immigration effort involving a total public expenditure of 37 million dollars, in addition to the much larger amount our railways and other agencies have contributed, to add 5,992,000 to our population. In this connection it is interesting to note that our annual immigration as far back as 1882 was well over a hundred thousand.

In the light of past experience, and the fact that we can no longer offer the strong appeal of the free homesteads and in face of a constantly falling birth rate, it should be fairly obvious to almost anyone that the task of adding a possible 8 million people to our present population may well be regarded as one of herculean proportions. It should be abundantly clear that past methods will not secure such a result within generations. The question for the people of Canada to decide is, whether they are prepared to wait for an unlimited period before the country is put on an even keel economically. If they are not, they should, with unmistakable emphasis, indicate their wishes in the matter.

#### **An Unpromising Outlook**

Largely for political reasons the Governments of Canada, past and present, have officially adopted an immigration policy solely designed to promoting immigration from the United Kingdom. It must, however, be regretfully conceded, with little success, which causes no surprise whatever to those who possess even a superficial knowledge of conditions there. It is obvious that the effect on migration of the various schemes of social insurance in Great Britain is bound to be disastrous. The security against the fear of unemployment, incapacity due to sickness, death of the provider, etc., afforded by this legislation at once removes any burning desire to break away from the home land and face the unknown overseas, where none of these consoling guarantees are available. The psychological effect of all this on the labouring classes is clearly recognized in the United Kingdom.

In addition to this we find in Great Britain a very important body of opinion determined to end the present discreditable, agrarian situation there. Mr. Lloyd George has recently staked his political future upon a scheme to expropriate and subdivide the great estates and enormously extend the small farm holdings throughout England and Scotland. We will, therefore, in all probability, soon be confronted with a domestic colonization scheme in Great Britain with far-reaching consequences to our immigration prospects there. That this will be the next important development in British internal policy admits of no doubt whatever. The agricultural situation there has long been a byword and a reproach in the eyes of the outside world and is centuries behind most advanced European countries. The agricultural population of Great Britain—the world's greatest market for food products—is decreasing. During the last 60 years four million acres of arable lands have gone down to grass!



## Two Pertinent Questions

Including gardeners, florists, agricultural machine proprietors and seedsmen, the total rural population of Great Britain is probably not over four millions. A bare ten per cent. of the population. The census statistic there do not clearly segregate the bona fide rural population. That of Holland, just across the channel, is also four millions, but it includes over half of the population. England may justly be regarded as one of the most fertile agricultural countries in the world, enjoying an unlimited and remunerative home market. All the conditions are present for spectacular agricultural prosperity. And out of this modest four millions of more or less skilled, rural inhabitants she is now about to endeavour labouriously to create a real, national agriculture.

We in Canada might well ask ourselves two pertinent questions. First, is it patriotic—is it ethical or even decent—to entice away, against the strenuous protest of British farmers, any of this pitifully, small remnant of rural people upon which the regeneration of British agriculture so abjectly depends? Secondly, in view of our urgent need of additional agricultural population in Canada, could any policy be more insane than to focus our entire attention on a country so completely industrialized that its skilled agricultural population consists of only a mere handful of people? These considerations have, of course, no significance whatever in the minds of our Federal immigration leaders. Political expediency is of paramount importance and the traditional policy of following the lines of least resistance has its irresistible appeal.

## Expert Opinions

Where are we to get people for Canada's vacant spaces in the immediate future? Dr. Black, the director of colonization for the National Railways, recently summed the situation up as follows:

"We can't get Germans by any enticement. The German farmer is enjoying unprecedented prosperity. The Scandinavian and Dutch people, who we are so anxious to have, are not easily induced to leave home. In some of these countries it is a punishable crime to make a public speech urging a man to leave his fatherland for citizenship under another flag. In Holland all applicants for emigration must pass before an old army officer whose word in this respect is law. France and

Belgium have colonies of their own to accommodate their surplus of population. Indeed, France is to-day drawing immigrants from other European countries to replace war wastage. That leaves Central Europe as the only recruiting ground."

Colonel Dennis, chief commissioner of Colonization for the Canadian Pacific is, if possible, even more emphatic in his statements regarding the difficulties in the way of considerable Northern and Western European immigration. He also looks to Central and Eastern Europe, where the great human reservoir of the white race is at present located. He sees no hope for any satisfactory movement of suitable people from any other quarter. These are the considered views of the two men best qualified to give an intelligent opinion on the subject in Canada.

## The Passing of Easy Results

So we must conclude that the days of easy accomplishment in the field of immigration are over. The economic situation in Europe is such that people with capital are no longer available for settlement on our lands in any large numbers. The social revolution in the old European civilizations—for it has been nothing less—has made the lot of the "under dog" vastly better than it ever was in so far as elimination of the fear of the consequences of sickness and unemployment is concerned. Steamship fares have been trebled. Canada must wake up to the uncomfortable fact that to obtain results anywhere near approaching those of former days—and even those must be considered absolutely inadequate in view of our present urgent requirements—it will be necessary to pursue policies vastly different from those of the past and present.

Our doors should, of course, remain wide open to every normal Britisher who wishes to make his home in Canada. We should also welcome acceptable, agricultural settlers from Northern Europe and other preferred countries. But those who are actively engaged in immigration work will tell us, without the slightest hesitation, that when all the available people from these countries have reached our shores, the total will only represent a fraction of Canada's obvious and pressing agricultural population requirements. From whence are we to obtain the balance of agricultural settlers we need? This pertinent question has not apparently interested our Department of Immigration.

## VI. The Case for Peasant Colonization

Addressing an important meeting in Toronto a couple of years ago, Sir Clifford Sifton, who is properly credited with an intelligent understanding of Canada's immigration problem, made this startling statement: "What Canada needs is the fellow in the sheepskin coat with the big, broad wife." If Sir Clifford had still been in public life, courageous as he is, he probably would not have made this bold and unpopular statement. Being a private citizen he felt he could afford to utter the unvarnished truth as he saw it and incur the risk of shocking his audience. The pronouncement in question, coming from such an authority, is, however, worthy of the most serious consideration and I, therefore, propose to submit it to critical analysis. But at the outset, I may as well freely confess that, in my judgment, it epitomizes the whole case. But Sir Clifford evidently said either too much or too little on that occasion.

### The Pioneering Task

The past score years has witnessed a gradual social and economic transformation in Anglo-Saxon and other northern countries, which has led to a standard of living unprecedented in history. It reached its peak during the post-war period. The younger generation has been reared under these new conditions and to the older generation they have by this time become a fixed habit. Hours of labour have been greatly curtailed, the household budget looks fantastic compared with that of the eighties and nineties, sanitary and household conveniences make the modern, modest home a place of delight and radio, autos and our amusements generally have been revolutionary in their effect. There can, of course, be nothing but the highest praise for this beneficial and extraordinary development.

But pioneering, at least in connection with our more inferior lands, is still largely what it was. It is perhaps somewhat less exacting than the task that confronted our forefathers during the heroic era of Ontario and the West. It is, however, still a backbreaking undertaking involving hardships and living conditions entirely out of tune with present standards of living in progressive countries. But we apparently persist in ignoring fundamental facts and expect our own kind of people cheerfully to embrace a task which their

environment has, in most cases, absolutely unfitted them for and rendered distasteful. The best evidence of the truth of this assertion is that practically the only actual colonists from Great Britain we are now able to interest are those who come to improved farms under the Empire Settlement scheme or similar plans, which movement bears not the least resemblance to pioneering.

In spite of all our exertions to draw so-called "white" agricultural settlers to Canada, east and west, this pioneering job on our enormous area of marginal lands still confronts us and it will remain an unsolved problem just so long as we regard the Eastern European peasant as an undesirable element in our national life and follow the present stupid course of placing obstacles in the way of this class of immigration. It is highly significant that these are practically the only class of people who have stayed with the job and succeeded in our drier prairie district and on our bush lands in Northern Ontario and British Columbia. Is there no useful lesson to us in that record? At any rate, if we persist in deliberately excluding them, we should do so with our eyes wide open and with a complete realization of the fact that we are seriously retarding Canadian national development. If we conclude that we can afford to do so, well and good, as long as we fully realize the cost.

### Ill-Informed Criticism

There is a distinct tendency in Canada to make a social issue out of the immigration question. Patriotic societies, not in possession of all the facts, applaud the "closed door" principle and magnify the presence of the foreigner in our midst into a social menace. This attitude of mind was naturally intensified by the wave of emotionalism created by the Great War. The people of Eastern Canada know the foreigner chiefly by his well-advertised, petty crime record. They base their estimate of his worth as a citizen upon the uninviting spectacle, daily before the eyes of residents of our industrial centres, of a congested slum population drawn largely from the submerged classes in South European cities. This is what the "foreigner" stands for in their estimation, and a disgusting picture it is, not perhaps particularly creditable to our great cities who tolerate it.

These well-intentioned, if ill-informed, critics, know nothing whatever about the splendid record of performance of the real peasant settlements on the prairies. They have not come in contact with the dogged perseverance, hard labour and frugal standard of living of these excellent people during years of stress. They have not seen the well tilled, smiling fields and neat village settlements planted on our prairies, wrought out of their own unaided labour. They do not hear about the second generation, speaking faultless English, entering our educational institutions and capturing the most coveted prizes. Above all, they do not know that these people, essentially agricultural, stick to the farm through thick and thin and have their roots so firmly in the soil that town life has no attractions for them. Western people, who live in close proximity to peasant colonies, have nothing but praise for the honesty, integrity and sensible frugality of these settlers. They do not recognize any social menace in their presence. I shall now deal briefly with some of the popular objections raised to foreign immigration.

#### The Standard of Living

The lower standard of living of the European peasant class is often criticized. But are we not in imminent danger of completely misunderstanding this very elastic phrase? I see a vastly greater menace to society in the almost universal weakness for too high a standard of living, than lurks in any class living well within its means, which is merely another way of describing a low standard of living. To have a hardworking, frugal family characterized as a social hazard because it declines to spend more than it earns, seems an entirely new point of view. Hitherto we have endeavoured to instil precisely these virtues in the minds of our children. We have even held them up as absolutely essential to worldly success. Are we not a trifle inconsistent, not to say ridiculous, in this modern attitude?

But my observations leads me to the conclusion that an inferior standard of living is invariably a reaction to economic necessity. For instance, the Danish farmers are rich. Man for man they are the richest farmers in the world. And they have risen into this pre-eminence in the short space of seventy-five years. Prior to that time they were struggling with landlessness, appalling illiteracy and dire poverty. Prosperity has quickly transformed them into free spenders. Henry Ford has a large assembling plant in Copenhagen. He has given the Danish farmers an inexpensive, rapid-transit marketing machine, and they are now clamouring for cars faster than he can

set them up. We need entertain no fear whatever that the standard of living of any class of farmers we can bring to Canada will not rise just as fast as their economic conditions warrant. A visit to the numerous prosperous peasant colonies in the West would furnish ample evidence of that fact.

#### Crime Record

The superstition prevails that the foreigner presents an uncomfortable problem owing to his supposed criminal proclivities. Taking the census of 1921 and our penitentiary population for the same year, we find that our British and French population of 7,322,000 furnished 2,157 prisoners or 3.40 per 1,000, while our foreign population of 1,467,000 supplied 483 inmates or only 3.03 per 1,000. This hardly bears out such a sweeping contention. But the simple, hard working and law abiding East European peasant should not be classed indiscriminately with the large South European population of our industrial slums districts where most of the serious crime occurs. At home he seldom comes in conflict with the authorities and no particular reason exists why he should change his habits on coming to Canada.

The experience in the United States has also been that, taking the country as a whole, the statistics of crime fail to show that foreign-born people are any more criminal than natives. Some years ago, figures were gathered indicating that in the entire United States the foreign-born prison population constituted 23.7 per cent. of the whole. The foreign-born males, over 15 years old, in that country constituted 23 per cent. of the class as a whole. This shows a very slight excess of criminals among foreigners, but when it is remembered that there is an abnormally large proportion of single men among foreigners there, that a very large percentage of them are now of South European origin and city bred and that they are likely to be young and poor, the difference is far too small to prove anything except that the alleged higher criminality record of the foreign element is a myth.

#### The Literacy Test

The objection of illiteracy is often urged against the foreign immigrant. Educational statistics, compiled from our latest census returns, apparently tell a very different tale. Here are some figures bearing on the percentage of illiteracy in Canada:—

Ages	Parents Canadian Born	Parents Foreign Born
10 to 20 years . . .	2.71%	3.45%
21 years and over ..	7.28%	4.45%
Total average ..	5.77%	3.79%

The general percentage of illiteracy amongst the population of Nova Scotia over school age is 5.11, New Brunswick 7.61 and Quebec 6.20. These provinces have a little over three per cent. of foreign population. Saskatchewan, with 25 per cent. of foreign population, has only 5.92 per cent. of illiteracy. How, in the face of these figures, can any such objection against the foreign immigrant be sustained?

Charles M. Herlihy, state supervisor of Adult Alien Education for Massachusetts, says: "It is significant to note that the native illiterate group represents 64 per cent. of our total national illiteracy problem—a rather embarrassing variation of the slogan "America first!" Recent United States census figures, however, tell a very interesting story on that point which can fairly be applied to Canada. The percentage of illiterates amongst adult native whites was 3.0, which is considerably lower than amongst foreign born whites, including the older generation of immigrants, predominatingly of Latin origin. But the astonishing fact is also revealed that the percentage of illiteracy amongst the white population born of foreign parents is actually only 0.9, showing conclusively the educational superiority of the second generation to the native American. So apparently the assimilation process is not so great a problem as we are led to regard it, one generation being a very brief period in a country's history. The evidence, both in Canada and the United States, is absolutely clear on this point, that the second generation of foreign immigrants far outstrips the native Canadian and American stock in point of literacy.

#### **The Morality Issue**

From a standpoint of morality also it cannot be shown that the foreigner in

our midst presents a special problem. Illegitimacy in Canada is very low compared with other countries and the domiciled foreigner apparently conforms to the same high standard. Saskatchewan has the largest foreign born, female population of any province in Canada. For the last three year period available, Saskatchewan's percentage of illegitimate to total births was 1.2. Alberta, with the largest percentage of foreign females to total population, 1.9 per cent. The percentage in Nova Scotia was 3.5, Ontario 2.2, Prince Edward Island, with scarcely any foreign population, 2.3 per cent., while Canada as a whole shows a shade below 2 per cent. of illegitimacy. Only one conclusion can be drawn from these figures, namely, that our foreign born population as a whole has an excellent morality standing, even far above the comparatively splendid record of our British born population, which is not so greatly to be wondered at in view of the strong, religious character of most of our foreign settlements.

It has become a habit with us to regard our foreign population as a problem if not an actual menace. Sensational journalism, class interests, unscrupulous political argument and mental indolence, to the extent that we cannot be bothered with ascertaining the facts, are responsible for this. I do not wish to pose as the apologist for the foreign inhabitant of our industrial centres, largely from Southern Europe, who represents whatever menace there may be to Canada in foreign immigration. But I desire strongly to emphasize this point, that even in the face of the admitted handicap of the shortcomings of the city slums, the foreign population of Canada as a whole compares favourably with the British stock in point of literacy and general morality.

## VII. The Land Problem and the Melting Pot

The passing of the "quota laws" south of the line was regarded in Canada as a social measure—an "anti-foreigner" demonstration. It naturally had a tremendous, and most unfortunate, effect on public opinion. Our bureaucracy, encouraged by some of our patriotic societies, gleefully seized upon it as a precedent for similar action in this country. Our present "partly-closed-door" immigration policy is the practical result which furnishes a characteristic sample of our usual, unintelligent imitation of United States legislation. While the press of that country has, for propaganda purposes, talked a great deal about "100 per cent. Americanism," the existing balance between native and foreign stock there could hardly have given any special cause for apprehension.

### The Political Background

Between 1850 and 1880 the proportion of foreign to native parentage increased from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. During the succeeding forty years, in spite of the wide, open door, it only increased from 30 per cent. to 35 per cent. It is also generously admitted, that the crucial test in assimilation afforded by the occurrence of the Great War created no considerable problem with the foreign population. This is a remarkable tribute to the loyalty, good sense and self-restraint of the foreign immigrant element of that country, and I feel certain that the popular verdict was the same in Canada in respect to the attitude of this class during that hideous period.

The quota law across the line is not in any sense to be regarded as a general indictment of the foreign population. It had a distinct political background. As a social measure it was not specifically directed against an influx of agricultural people from Eastern and Central Europe and it is well for Canada to remember, that the door was not even partly closed until the population there exceeded the hundred-million mark. The U.S. quota laws were primarily designed to stem the tide of a threatened flood of immigration from Latin countries. Secondly, it became a political necessity to protect the United States farmer from the menace of agricultural over-production in order to render effective a high

protective tariff against foodstuffs. Thirdly, the policy was generally acceptable to labour as constituting a measure of protection calculated to promote a high wages scale. Neither of the first mentioned conditions exist in Canada and our policy of rather discouraging peasant immigration is, in view of our present state of underdevelopment, therefore, as absurd as it is destructive to progress.

### A Timely Step

However widely individuals may differ as to the merits of the civilization that has developed south of the line during the past century, we cannot possibly escape the conclusion that the United States stands to-day as a powerful, prosperous commonwealth, whose citizens enjoy an average standard of living far above that of any other country, except perhaps our own. In the eyes of almost the entire world that country easily represents the modern El Dorado. This has been accomplished largely through the "open door" policy, which was consistently maintained for over a century.

If we, while jealously preserving our British institutions and traditions, could attain the same material results as our neighbour did, within a similar period, we should apparently have ample cause for self-congratulation. That we can do so following an opposite policy in regard to immigration is open to very serious doubt.

In view of the present well-balanced, economic situation in the United States the closing of the door to further immigration is without question an eminently sound and timely policy on economic grounds, entirely aside from the political motives behind it. No rational reason whatever could be urged why the United States should deliberately add to her present adequate population, being now quite able to overtake human wastage from natural increase and a limited immigration. Clearly a stationary, or perhaps very slowly increasing, population is obviously now the most advantageous situation for our neighbour. For Canada, in view of her undeveloped condition, to embrace exclusion policies at this time is, however, ridiculous in the extreme. The two cases are diametrically different.

### The "Marginal" Land Problem

Approximately one-third of Canada's estimated area of arable land is to-day alienated and occupied, though not fully developed. If we credit the people who selected this land with ordinary, common sense, we must conclude that it contains the cream of our vast, arable area. No agricultural country on earth would, in its virgin state, contain so large a proportion of high quality land as one-third of its arable area. We must, therefore, admit, and anyone conversant with the facts will readily support such a conclusion, that our present unalienated, arable area falls distinctly within the category of medium to inferior lands.

To obtain a true picture of our real colonization problem, we must realize that the bulk of these lands come within the term "marginal." An examination of them would at once reveal the fact that nine-tenths are below par in quality. They are located in areas where the rainfall normally is insufficient to produce satisfactory agricultural results, or they are heavily treed, are low lying, stony or have thin soil or exhibit other undesirable features. They are, in fact, culls. Most of these lands present a problem in human labour, and are marginal only until reclaimed by hard pioneering effort when they will graduate into the class of more or less productive lands. But their reclamation involves clearing, digging out of stones, drainage or similar uninviting and time-consuming labour, unproductive for the time being.

A depressing number of Canadians, Britishers and Americans have failed, at great economic loss and to the everlasting detriment of Canada, in establishing themselves permanently upon farms of that class in Western Canada. "Flivvers," rural phones and mail delivery can play no conspicuous part in such a toilsome undertaking. It calls rather for the Spartan life of the early back-woods settler of old Canada, with something approaching the crude standard of living then in vogue. Who is going to "mop up" this Herculean task for us? We might as well, now and clearly, recognize that the greater part of this strenuous enterprise cannot be successfully accomplished by people accustomed to the high standard of living of most of the countries we are pleased to designate "preferred" in our present immigration policy.

### The "High Spot" in the Picture

The successful colonization of these lands is our most immediate problem, which, however, cannot be solved by shutting our eyes to irrefutable facts however disturbing they may be. Every province of Canada, except perhaps Prince Edward Island, faces this situation.

The prairie section as well as the older provinces and the older provinces to a much greater degree than the prairies. We cannot formulate intelligent immigration policies in Canada without reference to this situation, which easily constitutes the "high spot" in our colonization problem. The obvious answer is a considerable influx of Central and East European peasants. No other class will successfully create homes on our vast areas of marginal lands.

Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and British Columbia harbour this problem in an intensified form. Previous failures in colonizing these provinces have their roots in the fact that no special notice has been taken of the special character of the lands to be settled and the absolute necessity of endeavouring to interest a class of people likely to surmount the difficulties that will confront them. The bush lands and dry districts of the west cannot be permanently developed by any other class of agricultural people. We have insisted on focussing our propaganda on Great Britain and Northern Europe when a moment's thought should have convinced us of the futility of such an effort. Vast areas of marginal lands on our prairie sections must be colonized by the peasant class or remain unoccupied indefinitely. Those in close touch with the situation entertain not the slightest doubt on that score.

### A Specialist in Pioneering

As regards the class I enter a special plea for, the peasant of Eastern and Central Europe, I say without hesitation, basing my finding on observation in his native village in Europe and upon his creditable record over many years on our Western plains, that he is, from almost every point of view, an eminently desirable element in our population, that he possesses in a high degree the peculiar virtues and qualifications essential to successful pioneering, the most important of which are frugality, perseverance and unremitting industry, and that there is not the least danger of any demoralizing influence to our native population from contact with him. On the contrary, he possesses virtues which might profitably be imitated by other members of the community.

Let me repeat that the key problem in colonization in every province in Canada, is the development of our enormous residue of inferior lands; lands generally of average soil quality, but involving strenuous pioneering effort in order to redeem and improve them into high class, productive farms. Experience proves conclusively that the European peasant—Sir Clifford Sifton's

"man with the sheep-skin coat"—is essentially the person to tackle this job, for which no other applicants are in sight. Any so-called immigration policy which does not welcome with open arms this specialist in our most difficult national development problem, is simply futile. Any such policy which actually places obstacles in the way of this useful class entering Canada, which is the present situation, is not far from being hopelessly insane. It can only be attributed to crass ignorance and a complete misconception of the character of Canada's most urgent and pressing colonization requirement.

### **The British Leaven**

I anticipate the inevitable objection to my proposal, which will be framed somewhat as follows: "Shall we deliberately turn Canada into a New Hungary or Poland." My answer is that we should redouble our efforts to bring over the greatest, possible number of people from the United Kingdom. The more, however, we increase rural settlement by peasants and others, the more easily we can absorb urban population, and our census returns show unmistakably that British immigration preponderantly settle in urban communities. Only 6.8% of our British born immigrant population own or operate farms.

It behooves Canada carefully to guard her sound, free British institutions, and to strain every nerve to foster a strong British sentiment, which apparently can best be done by encouraging a large influx of people from the United Kingdom and Ireland. As, however, we cannot and should not, move agricultural people from there in volume, we must strive to open the way for urban Britishers and also assiduously promote and enlarge the work of the admirable agricultural training schools for overseas settlers in Great Britain. We could also advantageously remove or relax some of our existing restrictions against British immigration, notably the offensive, and somewhat impertinent, "sailing permit" regulation for unaccompanied women and the expensive medical examination system. We should also speed up our machinery for interesting settlers from Northern and other "preferred" European countries. We cannot have too many of them.

### **The Problem of Assimilation**

It is a fact that the social and political effect of a great movement of people into a new country, with standards and language differing from the domiciled population, is not very serious where such people are settled in rural areas. Lack of urban contact will doubtless retard the process of assimilation, but, on the other hand, the countryside exercises a vastly

smaller influence on national life than the urban communities. Peasant settlements are, during the earlier stages, unobtrusive to a high degree. These people do not seek to exercise any directing influence in national affairs. And it is well that they should not until ready to contribute intelligently. Canada can absorb a very great percentage of this class of agricultural people without the least danger to our social and political life.

### **The Western Land Situation**

I do not wish to convey an erroneous impression in regard to the western land situation. Excellent farms, at prices vastly below those prevailing in older civilizations, are readily available, although it must be admitted that the free homestead of good quality and within reach of transportation is practically a thing of the past. Those who travel the agricultural portions of Western Canada are often puzzled to explain the presence of large areas of first-class unoccupied lands around most of our old-settled communities. Such lands are generally well served with transportation, educational and other facilities. Their settlement would materially ease the burden of those already in occupation in various ways and could give rise to no new public liability for the extension of services.

The ownership of such lands has generally passed from the crown and is in the hands of all sorts of companies, individuals and municipalities. The area is estimated at over 18 million acres. These lands are available at very reasonable prices and on favourable terms. Here is an opportunity for community effort and the various provincial governments might well take the lead in a movement towards a general "stock-taking" of these undeveloped resources, by promoting the formation of "Land Settlement Committees" in the smaller towns with the special object of colonizing these lands, and making them productive.

We have also an enormous area of occupied and partly developed lands in the hands of domiciled farmers who would welcome an opportunity to reduce their holdings and get a part of their properties into the hands of new-comers. The incidences of local taxation and labour problems have created a tendency towards the smaller farm operated on a more intensive basis. We need not, therefore, anticipate the slightest difficulty in meeting the requirements of new settlers from the United Kingdom, the United States and Northern Europe who could not be interested in settling upon lands remote from transportation, educational or social facilities, or upon a class of land requiring pioneering effort of the more strenuous sort.



## VIII. A National Colonization Policy

New conditions are facing us across the ocean which render it imperative to revise previous immigration policies. Agricultural settlers with even limited capital are no longer available in any considerable number. As a consequence we must, more or less, forget the term "immigration" and learn the significance of the word "colonization." Nothing short of a comprehensive plan involving the actual placing of people on the land, followed by an intelligent, friendly interest in their welfare for a couple of years after settlement will answer the case. It will be absolutely essential to provide modest, financial assistance to worthy, selected families to enable them to make the move. Canada, if she is to solve her population problem, must acquire the habit of thinking in terms of tens of millions of dollars in connection with plans involving an effective scheme of agricultural development.

### A Profitable Investment

Intelligently handled no national investment we can make will yield greater returns than providing an adequate capital to be utilized as direct loans to experienced farmers settling on our vacant spaces, at a very low rate of interest and with a repayment period of from 20 to 30 years, this capital to constitute a revolving fund. Private interests have not hesitated to adopt this policy in the West in volume running into millions; in fact, the only bona-fide colonization in Canada to-day is secured on this basis. It is interesting to note that the first prairie settlement in the West was organized on that plan so Canada has a very happy precedent for such a policy. The early Mennonite colonization in Manitoba was based on Federal financial assistance to the extent of \$100,000, which was repaid, in full, with 6 per cent. interest, within six or seven years.

While on this subject, I would like to make a very clear distinction between the character of the plan I have in mind and those followed in connection with our soldiers' settlement scheme and the Empire Colonization plan now in vogue, both of which contemplate advances vastly in excess of minimum necessities, and, consequently, hamper the new settler with a very serious capital liability. In both of these cases patriotic considerations enter into the question, which would have no place in a purely business transaction

such as I have reference to. My view is that assisted settlement of the character I propose should be based strictly on a pioneering foundation. The settler would start in his "dug out" with only the most essential equipment, as many of our successful farmers did in the past. Advances would not exceed a thousand dollars per settler. There are millions of agricultural families available that would fervently embrace such an opportunity to establish homes for themselves in Canada.

### Views of a Competent Authority

Few men can speak on colonization with greater authority than Mr. C. A. Magrath, one of the earliest pioneers of the West, who settled enormous areas there. His sound judgment and high executive ability afterwards carried him into such responsible positions as chairman of the "International Joint Commission," and, at present, administrative head of the Ontario "Hydro" organization. His wide, practical and successful experience in colonization is an indisputable fact. His present position might well guarantee his business perspicacity and prudence. Some time ago he published his conclusions respecting colonization. The following are extracts from his article:

" . . . . . What safer security is there for moneys advanced on the credit of the country than lands under production? That which we seem to indulge in most to-day is talk about the uselessness of trying to look for people to go on our lands when so many are leaving the country. The question we should ask ourselves is 'Have we ever developed an organization with money and courage to help to place those people where they could be self-supporting on the land?' . . . . ."

" . . . . . People in comfortable circumstances do not, as a rule, emigrate. Let us understand once and for all that we must use our credit if we expect to settle Canadian lands. . . ."

"The whole trend of thought in this country to-day is against spending. My point of view is just the opposite. I would spend every penny I could get my hands on for land settlement, provided I was getting results in nailing people down on the land. . . ."

"We appear determined to carry on

colonization of a very limited type. We seem to want something in the way of greater development, but apparently lack the courage to go after it in a big way.

"If it takes money to establish people on the land, and if we cannot get people with the money, how can we avoid paternalism? The only safeguard against danger from paternalism is in the strength of our colonization organization. . . . Let me put

this problem in another way. Suppose Canada had the courage to say, 'We propose circulating through a competent organization \$500,000,000 in land settlement effort.' I do not say within what period: that would be for a competent organization to determine, depending upon its success. . . .

My opinion is that the credit of the state should only be used for settlers on land and then only to the point where they are fairly well established, when a loan company could properly assume the risk. . . . Furthermore, the declaration of such a policy at this time would put enthusiasm into our Canadian people. It would rivet on this country of ours the eyes of people in Europe looking for homes. That is the way to get people. Trying to push them into the country never has given favorable results: First show the world that we have confidence in our country and in ourselves by being willing to pledge our credit in the upbuilding of Canada. . . ."

I commend the above to the most careful consideration of the people of Canada.

### The State and Colonization

Is this a proper enterprise for the State to engage in? This is what John Stuart Mill has to say on that subject in his famous textbook "Political Economy," regarded as an authority the world over:

"The question of government intervention in the work of Colonization involves the future and permanent interests of civilization itself, and far outstretches the comparatively narrow limits of purely economical considerations. But even with a view to those considerations alone, the removal of population from the over-crowded to the unoccupied parts of the earth's surface is one of those works of eminent social usefulness, which must require, and which at the same time best repay, the intervention of government."

"One of the principal reasons why colonization should be a national undertaking, is that in this manner alone, save in highly exceptional cases, can immigration be self-supporting. The exportation of capital and labor to a new country being, as before observed, one

of the best of all affairs of business, it is absurd that it should not, like other affairs of business, repay its own expenses. Of the great addition which it makes to the produce of the world, there can be no reason why a sufficient portion should not be intercepted, and employed in reimbursing the outlay incurred in effecting it. For reasons already given, no individual, or body of individuals, can reimburse themselves for the expense; the government, however, can. It can take from the annual increase of wealth, caused by the emigration, the fraction which suffices to repay with interest what the emigration has cost. The expenses of emigration to a colony ought to be borne by the colony; and this, in general, is only possible when they are borne by the colonial government."

Here is another opinion from the President of the National City Bank of New York, dealing with the social phase of the subject:

"Colonization—placing people on the land—is the great antidote to modern revolutionary tendencies. The farmer is, by and large, an evolutionist. He stands for security of property. It is the duty of the state to colonize its vacant spaces—even to the extent of subdividing great properties in older countries—in order to stabilize society."

### Domiciled Farm Labour

Aside entirely from the problem of settling our "marginal" lands with a class of farmers inured to the hardships incidental to pioneering, Canada faces an agricultural labour problem. And we might as well clearly understand that until this labour problem is solved we cannot make any worth while progress in diversifying our farming operations. With our highly mechanized agriculture in Canada we have a double difficulty to solve in connection with labour. First, we require a higher type of skilled men capable of operating and caring for intricate and expensive machinery and, secondly, the agricultural labour requirements are becoming more and more seasonal. The Canadian farmer now has to depend largely on town-bred and very inferior labour and where this is brought in in large volume, as during the harvest and threshing seasons of the West, it inevitably leads to an acute unemployment situation during the winter, which has been particularly difficult this year on account of the unfavourable weather.

It is clear that this whole system is radically wrong and uneconomic in the highest degree. In Great Britain and Europe farm labour is resident on the land or in villages, occupying cottages

and bits of gardens owned by the landlords. This system could not easily be introduced in Western Canada and would be difficult in the East. Recognizing that agricultural labour is distinctly in a class by itself and should be, as it were, attached to the land, the obvious course is to settle it on small farms where the labourer and his family can be profitably employed when not working out. The present situation presents a useful field for careful investigation.

#### Assisted Labour Settlement

Skilled, agricultural labour can be obtained amongst the European peasantry and it should be a comparatively simple matter to work out a plan of assisted labour settlement on small individual areas of our more inferior lands, coupled with an economical transportation scheme from such settlements to districts where seasonal help is needed. These "labourer-settlers" would in time develop their own holdings and become useful producers, or purchase larger areas as they accumulate capital. Our sugar industry depends absolutely on peasant labour. Our own kind of people will not perform that class of work.

The question of occasional domestic labour also enters into the matter. The overworked housewife faces periods of extra strain during the agricultural year. It is useless to look to urban centres as a source of occasional help. Domestic servants will not go into country districts away from the conveniences and amusements of the towns. And they do not have to. Competition for their services is too keen in urban communities. To obtain such labour upon our farms for short periods during the year is, therefore, practically impossible. The plan under discussion would also solve this very serious problem. The wives and daughters of this class of settlers would welcome the opportunity to earn a substantial sum during haying, harvesting, threshing and fruit picking seasons as well as in our sugar beet fields where this system has already been successfully tried out.

#### Agricultural Wages

Objections will be made to labour of this class accepting rates of pay below that usually demanded. But we cannot safely think in terms of wages and shop conditions of urban labour when discussing the necessities of our agriculture. No one deplores the farmer's inability to pay union wages and adopt union hours

more thoroughly than the farmer does himself. But to apply such an ideal program would involve butter at a dollar a pound retail with prices of other farm produce in proportion, and no class of consumer has hitherto exhibited any alarming desire to voluntarily place his household budget on any such costly basis.

The farmer, being manager, capitalist and labourer all rolled into one, is directly and instantly confronted with fundamental, economic facts. One of them is that there must be a proper relation between the cash wages paid for an hour's labour and its productive returns. He cannot "pass on" any added cost to the consumer. If he cannot hire labour at a feasible rate of pay, he must either hand over to his hired man all, or part, of what he personally produces in "the sweat of his brow," which is to some extent the situation at present, or he must curtail his operations or "go broke."

A colonization policy that would even partly solve this problem would instill new life into Canadian agriculture. Certainly, we cannot permit the purely theoretical objections to cheaper farm help, entertained by our urban labour leaders, to stand in the way of the proper development of our basic industry. If organized labour in Canada is wise, it will confine its attention strictly to its own urban problem, towards which organized agriculture so far has shown an amazing degree of unselfish sympathy. But there is political dynamite in any attempt to add to the burden of agriculture through class opposition to an economic scale of farm wages.

#### The Substance of the Case

I emphasize the special need of peasant immigration on three grounds: First, to ensure the permanent development of our marginal lands, and incidentally, to solve our agricultural labour problem. Secondly, in the interest of greater general agricultural development, which would enable us to absorb an increased number of Britishers in our urban communities. Thirdly, to augment Canada's consuming and producing population, realizing that Great Britain and "preferred" European countries cannot furnish a volume of immigration anywhere near adequate requirements. As to the extent of a peasant movement, that matter must be determined by the people of Canada with all the facts before them. My own considered judgment is that it could scarcely be too great.

## IX. The Fifth Wheel on the State Carriage

There is no good object gained in ever failing to look facts straight in the face. During the two last census periods, between 1901 to 1921, Canada made a total gain in population of 3,417,000. During the same period we received 3,340,000 immigrants. Freely translated this means, that a volume of population approximately equal to our natural increase left the country. In other words, it is clear that for the present at least Canada must look almost solely to her immigration to augment her population. This should bring us to a clearer realization of the task that confronts us. It should impress us with the fact, that immigration is not a subject we can afford to delegate to an inferior position in our governmental scheme. On the contrary, intelligent citizens will conclude that it is an issue of such vital importance to our very existence that it must be forced upon the unwilling attention of the men in public life, who, owing to the very difficulties that surround it, are only too pleased to permit it to continue to remain in the background.

When, after years of idle chatter, we leisurely concluded that perhaps immigration was after all a sufficiently important national activity to be assigned a department of its own, presided over by a responsible minister, we consistently left the portfolio vacant! And when at length we appointed a permanent Deputy Minister of Immigration, in order to sustain our traditional attitude of cynical disdain for everything pertaining to immigration, we naturally stuck a convenient—and doubtless quite worthy and highly efficient—trade commissioner from South Africa into this labyrinthic job, minus any colonization experience whatever or first-hand knowledge of Western Canada; qualifications which intelligent people would regard as absolutely indispensable. All of this with the inevitable result. And there exactly the matter stands to-day. Aside from the brief period of Sir Clifford Sifton's regime, Canada's immigration administration during the past quarter of a century reveals a record of almost studied neglect and incapacity. It has played the inconspicuous and profitless role of fifth wheel on the governmental wagon.

### A Super-Task

The formulation and execution of policies having for their object the transplantation of people from other countries is a task requiring executive abilities of a high order, infinite tact, a thorough knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of almost every part of this Canada of ours and an almost inexhaustible fund of human sympathy. It is an enterprise bristling with difficulties and demanding seasoned experience and an intimate knowledge of the reasons underlying the many failures and few successes of past efforts in that direction. Few men are temperamentally fitted for such a responsibility. Fewer still possess the requisite experience and other qualifications.

The tearing up by the roots of hundreds of thousands of families in their native haunts and starting them out on a great adventure in a strange country is a task that should not be lightly undertaken. It involves a traffic in human lives and fortunes, leading too often to appalling consequences for the individual. Even under the soundest administration and most carefully considered plans, the proportion of failures is bound to be large and frequently through no fault of the settler himself. Systematic, large-scale colonization is a social experiment demanding the best brains and experience Canada can command. There may be room in other government activities for mediocre or inexperienced personell, but the momentous task of procuring new citizens as a foundation for a greater and more prosperous Canada, is one that our federal government should approach with a due sense of its importance and of the social responsibility involved, entirely aside from the wise expenditure of public funds. In short our immigration service should be lifted up to the higher plane it ought to occupy, under competent, experienced heads imbued with a complete realization of the super-problem that confronts them and an enthusiastic desire to solve it.

### Unofficial Effort

There is, however, a bright spot in this drab picture. The railway companies of Canada, realizing the absolute necessity of creating traffic to make their transportation enterprises profitable, aided by the trans-atlantic steamship concerns and the

larger land companies, have for many years carried on an energetic propaganda in the United States and overseas and it is perhaps well within the facts of the case to attribute to those agencies, spurred on by motives of commercial self-interest, most of the credit for what has actually been accomplished in the way of tangible colonization results in Canada. It is also a safe conjecture that, aside from capital expenditure involved in any actual colonization activities, sufficient money is now being expended by present active agencies to bring satisfactory immigration results with intelligent co-ordination.

But the Federal department stands in the controlling position, a fact which it never loses sight of. Where it should encourage and even assume the active leadership in co-operative effort, it frequently obstructs with bureaucratic obstinacy. The mental attitude is that of "exclusion" rather than persuasive invitation. Obviously, an exclusion policy presents an easy and comfortable departmental problem, while an active immigration policy automatically creates a graduated scale of results from which official efficiency may be correctly estimated. So it is not surprising that the exclusion theory is so firmly entrenched that, as Commissioner Lamb of the Salvation Army so picturesquely put it, "it is becoming harder for an immigrant to gain admission to Canada than for the proverbial camel to enter the eye of the needle."

#### **Co-ordinating Immigration Work**

Nothing could be more important than co-ordinating Canadian immigration work abroad. Obviously, all overlapping should be studiously avoided. It is also a fact that each individual agency might profitably confine its efforts to the field where it could apparently do the most effective work. Northern European countries come within the area approved by the Federal authorities as a source of immigration and the two railways and steamship companies maintain offices and staffs in most of their principal seaport towns, issue literature in the vernacular and organize agencies throughout these countries. In obedience to Canadian average public opinion, which naturally favours special effort to attract Britishers and also entertains varying degrees of prejudice against other races, the Federal Government apparently deems it politically wise to leave the continental field entirely to the railways, except in the matter of control, and to concentrate its whole expenditure and active effort on Great Britain; all of which seems to be almost the exact opposite of what an intelligent analysis of the situation would indicate should be done.

#### **No Invitation Forthcoming**

It is a notorious fact that the "preferred" countries in Europe frequently discourage the emigration of their nationals. It seems a very inconsistent attitude for over-crowded countries to maintain, but such is, unfortunately, the actual situation. The Scandinavian countries are particularly suspicious and super-visory in connection with all emigration effort on the part of transportation companies, arguing that the sole interest of such concerns lies in the sale of railway and steamship tickets. Under the circumstances the representatives of these companies are frequently hampered and obstructed on all sides. The prejudice against emigration is, in fact, so pronounced that the standing of anyone connected with that business is very low down on the social scale.

The authorities of continental countries, on the other hand, entertain a wholesome respect for all governmental institutions. They argue, and not without sound reason, that if Canada really wishes to induce their nationals to settle within her borders, it is surely the business of the government of Canada to take the responsibility of issuing the invitation, openly and directly. If she fails to do so, as she does so magnificently, they should not be blamed if they look with suspicion on the propaganda of apparently unauthorized transportation companies having obvious selfish interests to serve.

Some of the provinces of Canada, many of the great steamship companies and the two Canadian railways, carry on a vigorous and intelligent immigration propaganda in the United Kingdom. The Federal Government does likewise. But, if necessary, this field might well be partly relinquished by the Dominion, in view of the activities of other effective agencies, in order that the Government of Canada might render funds available to provide for direct representation on the continent of Europe, thus placing the official and propitiating seal on immigration work there. Common sense would seem to dictate such a course if people from those "preferred" countries are really desired in Canada.

#### **A Chapter in Population History**

But we have yet to consider what is perhaps the most ominous and disturbing cloud on the horizon of immigration activities. It is a universal condition which, however, may well be viewed with considerable apprehension. History and statistics show that it took the world the better part of half a million years to reach a population of 750 millions up to the year 1800. Food had normally been scarce and this near-starvation

condition had acted as a powerful brake on natural increase according to well-known, economic laws. Came the golden age of invention, followed by rapid and cheap transportation on sea and land, which in turn led to the opening up, in temperate zones overseas, of vast continents of virgin lands, constituting huge food reservoirs.

This, coupled with the increased mechanization of agriculture, relieved the pressure by providing cheap and abundant food, which automatically begot the most spectacular increase in world population that history records and probably ever will record. Within one brief century, during the latter part of which the world wallowed in food at bargain prices, population actually doubled reaching 1,500 million in the year 1900. With European population at the very peak, Canada naturally garnered her human harvest comparatively easily. Our opportunity to obtain additional population is, however, drawing to a close rapidly because a new era is now dawning inasmuch as there are no more extensive, empty spaces within temperate zones. The day of cheap food is definitely past, and presently the earth will only be made to yield more abundantly through the expensive and laborious process of intensive cultivation. Prof. East of Harvard, after painstaking investigation, tells us that if the same fantastic birth-rate should by any chance continue, the world would be on the verge of actual starvation by 1960!

### Working Against Time

But economic laws are at work and we need entertain no apprehension. Vital statistics demonstrate clearly that the general birth rate is falling rapidly everywhere. Great Britain now has the lowest birth rate of any nation, even lower than that of France. Economists freely predict a stationary, or possibly receding, future world population. Beyond all shadow of doubt, in 15 or 20 years Canada will look overseas in vain for surplus man-power to develop her resources. So we are essentially working against time in our present leisurely colonization effort. With the passing of each year the problem will be irrevocably intensified. For a few years yet European countries may remain partly over-populated with adults, but our chances to secure more people are dwindling steadily day by day. It requires no prophetic foresight to conclude that the time limit within which Canada may solve her population problem, in terms of millions of new citizens, is coming to an end.

### Commandeer "All the Talent"

At the last Dominion Boards of Trade convention at Winnipeg a great variety of problems affecting the different sections of Canada, from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia, were discussed at length by a picked body of representative business men from every part of Canada. It was most significant and the fact was freely commented upon, that on analyses the solution of each of them was found to rest almost entirely on the rapid augmentation of Canada's producing and consuming population. This was the deliberate opinion of a body of men closely in touch with commerce, industry, transportation, construction and agriculture in every part of the Dominion. Speaker after speaker brought out this fundamental point clearly and conclusively. There was not a dissenting voice. Very few resolutions were passed at this important gathering and the one dealing with the colonization question was undoubtedly the most emphatic and constructive of them all. It recited in part:

"That this conference respectfully urges upon the Federal Government:

"The immediate creation of a small, non-political advisory board or commission on 'Colonization and Agricultural Development,' composed of Canada's leading experts on the subject and skilled business executives, such persons to be invited to contribute their time and skill as a matter of public service and without compensation other than expense allowances.

"The early investigation, in co-operation with the proposed advisory board or commission, of the feasibility of a great "Agricultural and Colonization Forward Movement," including a scheme of moderately assisted settlement available to desirable agricultural settlers of British, European and American origin, carried out in conjunction with the Canadian railways and other land-owning bodies, this movement to have due regard to the needs of and opportunities in every part of Canada and particularly to the need of replenishing the rural population of the Maritime Provinces and repatriation of former Canadians and their descendants now living in other countries with special reference to former French-Canadians now resident in the New England and Atlantic States."

### Follow Australia's Lead

When this request was presented to the Federal Government, the then Prime Minister is said to have expressed some doubt as to whether the right type of men would be willing to render national services on the basis suggested. The func-

tion of such a body would not, of course, be administrative, but purely advisory, and it can scarcely be open to doubt that Canada's most outstanding men would cheerfully accept this responsibility without compensation. In fact, the services of such men could never be obtained by the Government on any salary basis within the customary limits.

The average Canadian voter, while tacitly agreeing that energetic immigration effort is highly desirable, is very far from an adequate realization of the vital importance of ending the present "waiting on Providence." The problem of population is by far the greatest that faces

Canada, and an advisory board, commission or committee, bringing fresh minds, unhampered by politics and departmental red tape, to bear on the subject, could render services of incalculable value to the state. Government "commissions," manned by political friends drawing down handsome salaries, have never been popular in Canada. But one finds it difficult to understand what objections could be raised to "commandeering" our best brains and experience to focus its efforts on our most vital, national problem. Australia has recently followed this sensible and efficient course. Canada should do likewise.







